

LOSING finalists for the last two years, Wycombe Wanderers took the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup on pure merit on Monday, when they outfought Slough Town — so often their 'bogey' team — to take the trophy for the first time since 1969.

It was a memorable moment for Wycombe, who have missed out for the last two years in the county final, losing both times to the Rebels. Although they have slipped in the Isthmian League this term, Monday's triumph was just reward for their efforts.

Ironically, Wycombe were probably the more proficient side when they lost to Slough in '71 and '72. This year Slough reached the Amateur Cup Final, and look like winning the Athenian League, Premier Division, but have now surrendered their hold on the Senior Cup. But there was no mistaking the superior side at Chessham on Monday.

It was the Blues' trophy on merit, for they at first outfought and later on almost outplayed Wycombe side gave their all but inevitably some stood out.

My vote for men of the match goes to the Wanderers midfield trio of Rob

Wycombe W. 1, Slough T. 0

Report by STUART EARP

Williams, Larry Pritchard and Johnny Hutchinson. It was in this department that the match was won.

Pritchard and Williams have been Wanderers' two most consistent men this season and victory made it all worth while. Keith Searle too had a fine game, scoring the crucial goal and generally coming out on top of his duel with experienced defender Keith Mead.

But the man who gained most satisfaction from the victory must be John Delaney, the Blues' skipper. On five occasions, John had received only losers' medals in county cup finals but the enthusiasm and effort he put into his personal game, ensured a winners' moment to this year.

Many were surprised with Slough. I, for one, expected more from the holders but as the game progressed they began to fall away and they looked beaten long before the final whistle.

Indeed, except for one short period of pressure before half-time, they presented little for Wycombe to worry about at all.

Outplayed in midfield despite the Trojan efforts of Terry Reardon, their main strength up front in the shape of big Mick Chatterton, was shaken from the start by Delaney and Dave Bullock. Former Wanderer Geoff Anthony was always dangerous but tired towards the finish.

In contrast to Friday's dry weather, both sides had to contend with a muddy surface and driving rain. The ball skidded about like a piece of wet soap and took a good deal of controlling.

The first half therefore started with both sides over anxious to avoid mistakes. Before long, though, Wycombe began to take the initiative. In the seventh minute John Delaney escaped Chatterton and forced Ian Wolstenholme, the Slough

keeper, to punch the ball clear. Hutchinson drove hard for goal but the ball streaked over the top.

Two minutes later, however, Dave Bullock almost handed the Rebels a gift goal. His pass back to John Maskell fell too short and was intercepted by Mick O'Sullivan. As Maskell advanced, however, the tiny striker sent the ball across the face of the goal and wide.

When Williams tested Wolstenholme with a low drive in the 14th minute it capped a highly promising quarter for Wycombe and from then on they never really looked back.

There were occasional moments of danger like when Anthony beat both Derek Gamblin and Delaney in one run down the wing but with Wycombe gradually gaining control of midfield they made sure the pressure didn't last for long.

At half-time there was still no score and the Blues must have been well pleased with the situation. In both the semi-final and final of the Amateur Cup, Slough tailed off in the second half. It happened again on Monday with Wanderers finishing much the stronger.

It was only four minutes into the new period when Wycombe broke the deadlock. A free-kick was awarded to Wycombe inside the Rebels half and Delaney again rose above the Slough defence. This time it paid dividends, for he just managed to put the ball through to Keith Searle who had enough space and time to prod the ball over the line, despite the attentions of two defenders and Wolstenholme.

Soon afterwards John Maskell was called upon to save his first direct shot from a Slough man when the burly Chatterton took up possession just inside his own half. Dribbling the ball to the edge of the penalty area, the leading scorer sent in a powerful left-foot drive but Maskell saved well.

In a desperate bid for an equaliser Slough, who had earlier played the ball mainly on the ground via Anthony, began to pump hopeful passes high upfield. In doing so they only enhanced Delaney's reputation and he simply returned the ball upfield — with interest.

In the 20th minute Rob Williams was booked for a foul on Reardon — the only blot to an otherwise tremendous performance. It was his fifth booking of the season and second in two matches.

In the 70th minute Slough brought on Laurie Churchill for Jamieson, moving Ian Reid to the back. The choice of Churchill as number 12 was a peculiar one, for he is normally the Rebels' coach, rather than a member of the playing staff.

Towards the later stages of the

The expected threat of Chatterton's bullet free-kicks was given only one chance to materialise when the Rebels were awarded a free-kick in the 76th minute. Tony Horseman, however, blocked his shot and the danger was cleared. Two minutes later, however, Slough were only inches away from an equaliser.

Roger Day took a corner on the left which Churchill touched on towards the far post. Maskell was already committed with the cross but Paul Birdseye pipped O'Sullivan to the ball as it bobbed dangerously near the Blues' goaline.

It was Slough's final chance. For the remaining minutes Wycombe took control, carving out some neat raids with excellent passing despite the difficult conditions. Kenny Swain, who had a quiet match, almost put it beyond all doubt with a 20-yard run in the closing seconds out the ball finished wide of the post.

John Delaney received the trophy from Mr. F. W. Lewis, president of the Berks and Bucks F.A., and returned with the team to the pitch in front of an extremely happy Wycombe crowd.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; D. Gamblin, D. Bullock, J. Delaney, P. Birdseye; R. Williams, J. Hutchinson, L. Pritchard; A. Horseman, K. Searle, K. Swain. Sub.: A. Gane (not used).

SLOUGH: I. Wolstenholme; S. Jamieson (sub. L. Churchill 70 mins.); K. Mead, A. D'Arcy, R. Eaton; T. Reardon, R. Day, I. Reid; M. O'Sullivan, M. Chatterton, G. Anthony.

Referee: P. H. Sawyer (Blatchley). **Half-time:** 0-0. **Goalscorer:** Wycombe Searle (49).

Attendance: 3,500.